

BIBLE STUDY SERIES



# ESTHER

## BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR

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Proclaiming the Revelation of Jesus

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On occasion, I have inserted italics and brackets in Scripture quotations to enhance understanding, not to change the meaning.

May God bless you as you study this fascinating topic!

Larry Wilson

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# Forward

Nothing excites me more than to discover deeper insight from the Scriptures. As I began to focus my study on prophecy, I was amazed how many well-known Bible stories have such profound end time parallels. This is one of ten stories which were originally published in a monthly newsletter during the first ten months of 2002. Here are my reasons for republishing these stories:

First, I hope each booklet will be widely distributed because everyone needs to know that the Bible has never been more relevant and timely than right now! I realize many other Bible stories have end time parallels, but I have chosen these particular stories because they are rich in content. As each story is placed into proper context, it is easier to understand *how* and *why* God's people will be tested during the Great Tribulation.

Second, I want you to have enough background information about the character in each story to feel as though you were there when the story took place. Understanding the tests, struggles, mistakes, and victories experienced by the characters should encourage and prepare us for the days ahead.

Last, I want you to know that faith in God means to submit to His demands and remain loyal to Him in the face of life-threatening adversities. If any concept stands out, I hope it is this: Faith in God is much more than believing there is a God. When people truly love God, their everyday actions will reflect a dedicated commitment to honor

His ways, which are distinctly different from the ways this world honors. A faith-filled Christian often stands in direct opposition to what the world esteems;<sup>1</sup> therefore, honoring God is not always a pleasant experience.

The pressure to conform to the status quo explains, in part, why ancient Israel frequently apostatized.<sup>2</sup> Tragically, the priests of Israel failed to lead the people to understand that as a nation, they must be vigilant because mankind is inherently rebellious toward God.<sup>3</sup>

When the draw of our carnal nature is combined with the pressure to conform to the world's ways, serving God becomes a frustrating challenge and requires *patient* faith.<sup>4</sup> God understands our dilemma. This is why He preserved so many stories of faith in the Bible. Unless we examine and understand the failures and the victories of our forefathers, we will repeat their mistakes.

The Bible is clear; salvation comes through faith in God. Given this sublime truth, I hope you will gain a new appreciation about many aspects of faith as you read these booklets. Faith in God is so much more than intellectual assent to, or agreement with, an idea. Faith in God leads to adventure and fills your heart with peace and joy. True happiness springs from knowing and loving the great "I AM."

Larry Wilson, September 2020

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1 Romans 8:7

2 2 Kings 17:15

3 Ezekiel 22:26

4 James 1:3

# **Esther – Beautiful Savior**

The Bible is the most amazing book on Earth and it takes time and effort to get acquainted with its treasures. Pure gold and precious gems do not lie on the surface of the ground and neither do the riches of God's grace lie on the surface of the pages in the Bible. We must first be patient and use persistent effort before the precious nuggets of truth are discovered.

I would like to share a dramatic Bible story that has important end time parallels. It is the story of how God used two beautiful women, Vashti and Esther, to rescue His people. God included this story in the Bible for a reason, and I would like to share some insights that fascinate me. This story begins in 483 B.C., during the third year of King Xerxes. I have modified the biblical narrative in the book of Esther in several places for clarity and brevity.

## **Part I – Vashti Says “No”**

**“This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the [King] Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush [Egypt]. At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa, and in the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The**

military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present. For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days . . . for all the people from the least to the greatest, who were in the citadel of Susa.”<sup>1</sup>

“Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king’s liberality.”<sup>2</sup>

“[Simultaneously] Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women [of Susa] in the royal palace of King Xerxes. On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him . . . to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. But when the attendants delivered the king’s command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.”<sup>3</sup>

“Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times[, protocols and laws of the day]. . . . ‘According to law, what must

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1 Esther 1:1-5, insertions mine

2 Esther 1:7

3 Esther 1:9-12, insertions mine

be done to Queen Vashti?’ he asked. ‘She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

“Then [one of the wise men] Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, ‘Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes. For the queen’s conduct will become known to all the women [throughout the kingdom because many women are with her at the feast next door], and so they will despise their husbands and say, “King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.” This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen’s conduct will respond to all the king’s nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord [toward men]. Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. Then when the king’s edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

1 Esther 1:13-15, insertion mine

2 Esther 1:16-20, insertions mine

**“The king and his [less than sober] nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memukan proposed. He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man *should be* ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.”<sup>1</sup>**

### Commentary

When Vashti was summoned to the banquet room, she knew the king and all his friends were drunk because they had been partying for seven days. She instinctively knew that to parade before a bunch of drunken men was a recipe for trouble.

Vashti was well aware of her beauty and the influence it had on men. Evidently the king wanted a sensual display of beauty. She knew that if one drunk fool made a suggestive remark about her in the king's presence, the hilarity and high spirit of this grand occasion could suddenly turn into an ugly brawl of rage and violence. She was trapped in a very difficult situation because the women of the kingdom looked to her as an example of what they should do. She rightly chose to refuse the invitation of the king, even though she knew it would cost her dearly. Contrast the different parties: The king was

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 1:21-22, insertion mine



drinking, feasting, and having a jolly good time. The queen, on the other hand, was in her chamber on the verge of tears.

It would be an understatement to say that King Xerxes was highly embarrassed by his wife's refusal. Each time I read this part of the story I laugh. I can picture a befuddled king consulting with his befuddled advisors—all of them trying to figure out what to do with a woman who just said “No.” Judging by the conversation, their biggest fear was that Vashti's example would encourage all of the women in the kingdom to say “No” to their husband's demands. How ironic that these mighty men of valor are fearful that there would be no end to trouble from women. So, they concocted a plan supposed to keep all women in submission. Their advice, inflamed by drunkenness, prompted the king to make a great proclamation in many different languages. In short, the decree said: “Women must obey their husbands.”

What is so amusing about this situation is that the drunken king issues a decree to 127 provinces that even he could not fulfill. Xerxes ruled over much of the then known world. He had power over life and death, but he could not control his wife. I do not think there is an end time parallel for this part of the story, but I am still smiling. Even though Vashti wisely refused her husband's command, she was not physically harmed. Perhaps the

Lord protected her from the punishment usually issued for defiance.

However, Vashti's refusal did set a sequence of events in motion that eventually propelled a beautiful Jewish girl to Xerxes' side as Queen of the Medes and Persians! Actually, the hand of God caused this episode of musical-chairs. It was God's purpose to remove Vashti from the throne and have Esther replace her because a sinister event was about to unfold.

## **Part II – Esther Crowned Queen**

**“[About three years] later when the anger of King Xerxes had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what he had decreed about her. Then the king's personal attendants proposed, ‘Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa.’”<sup>1</sup>**

**“When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She**

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 2:1-3, insertion mine

[Esther] pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem. Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

“She [Esther] was taken to King Xerxes in the royal residence in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He proclaimed a holiday throughout the provinces and distributed gifts with royal liberality.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Part III – Haman Loathes Mordecai**

“[A few weeks after Esther's banquet, Uncle] Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate [when], Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate

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1 Esther 2:8-10, insertion mine

2 Esther 2:16-18, insertion mine

**King Xerxes. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles. All this was recorded in the book of the annals in the presence of the king.”<sup>1</sup>**

**“[Months later] King Xerxes honored [his best friend, a very wealthy man named] Haman . . . elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king’s gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor. Then the royal officials at the king’s gate asked Mordecai, ‘Why do you disobey the king’s command?’ Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai’s behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew. When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. Yet having learned who Mordecai’s people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai [for Haman and all of the nobles hated the Jews]. Instead, Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.”<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Esther 2:21-23, insertions mine

<sup>2</sup> Esther 3:1-6, insertions mine

## **Part IV – A Universal Death Decree**

**“[About five years after Esther became queen] In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the (pur that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month [to kill all of the Jews]. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar. Then Haman said to King Xerxes [cleverly, without mentioning the word “Jew”], ‘There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king’s laws; it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver [about 375 tons!] to king’s administrators for the royal treasury.’ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman . . . the enemy of the Jews. ‘Keep the money’ the king said to Haman, ‘and do with the people as you please.’ ”<sup>1</sup>**

**“Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman’s orders . . . and sealed [it] with his [the king’s] own ring. Dispatches were sent**

<sup>1</sup> Esther 3:7-11, insertions mine

by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—*young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar* [February/March], and to plunder their goods. A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.”<sup>1</sup>

“The couriers went out, spurred on by the king's command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.”<sup>2</sup>

## Commentary

The casting of the pur (or lots) was an ancient method for determining God's will. The casting of the pur was more than a casual or random decision. For example, we toss a coin at the beginning of a football game to determine who will possess the football. The casting of the pur was considered more serious. Gentiles (like Haman and the sailors that cast Jonah overboard<sup>3</sup>), as well as the Jews, used the pur because they believed it revealed God's will. For example, on the Day of Atonement, the pur was cast in the presence of the Lord to

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1 Esther 3:12-14, insertions and italics mine

2 Esther 3:15

3 Jonah 1:7

determine which goat would be the Lord's goat.<sup>1</sup> When Israel entered the Promised Land, the pur was cast in the presence of the Lord to determine how the land would be divided among seven of the twelve tribes.<sup>2</sup> Even the Romans cast the pur to divide up the clothing of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> The *thirteenth day of the twelfth month* was set by the casting of the pur. Because each month begins with a new moon in God's calendar, it is possible for the thirteenth day of the month to be a full moon. Due to elliptical orbit of the moon, a full moon can occur as early as the thirteenth day and as late as the fifteenth day of a month. Having the light of a full moon to complete killing the Jews must have been a definite plus in Haman's wicked mind when he saw the results. As it turns out, the Jews were able to use the light from a full moon to defend themselves. As you will see, there is more to the date and timing of the universal death decree issued on God's people than just a random event.

## Part V – Esther's Test

**“When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. .**

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1 Leviticus 16:8

2 Joshua 18:1-10

3 Matthew 27:35

**. . Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why. So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him [Hathak] to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.”<sup>1</sup>**

**“Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ‘All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.’**

**“When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of**

<sup>1</sup> Esther 4:1-8, insertion mine



**all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?'**

**"Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'"**<sup>1</sup>

### **Commentary**

Queen Esther, like Queen Vashti before her, found herself in a very distressing situation. Even though she was *the* queen, the king had young concubines constantly clamoring for his attention. His emotional attachment to Esther was not like that of a typical husband and wife. She had not seen the king for a month when Mordecai implored her to go before him and plead for their lives! Esther knew that if she imposed herself upon the king by violating court protocol, she would likely die or face the same banishment as Vashti. She also knew that the law of the Medes and Persians, once made, could not be changed. As a female, she also knew that if she ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 4:9-16

peared too aggressive, the king might be repulsed. Esther had not forgotten Vashti's experience. These facts motivated her reluctant response to her uncle.

Mordecai responded to Esther with some very sober words: **“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”**<sup>1</sup>

This statement shows how great Mordecai's faith in God really was. He knew that if Esther refused, she too would perish because the law of the Medes and Persians showed no favoritism. Still, Mordecai encouraged her by saying that relief and deliverance for the Jews would arise from another place. Mordecai sincerely believed that God would not allow His people to become extinct at this time. Mordecai knew how God had promised Abraham that Messiah would come through his offspring and since Messiah had not appeared, Mordecai was 100% sure that God would deliver His people. The decree sent out by Haman, bearing the name of King Xerxes, was actually a universal death decree. It left no way out. Every Jew was to be killed—period.

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 4:13-14

## **Part VI – Esther’s First Banquet**

**“On the third day [of fasting] Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.**

**“Then the king asked, ‘What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.’**

**“ ‘If it pleases the king,’ replied Esther, ‘let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.’**

**“ ‘Bring Haman at once,’ the king said, ‘so that we may do what Esther asks.’**

**“So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, ‘Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.’**

**“Esther replied, ‘My petition and my request is this: If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the**

**king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question.' ”<sup>1</sup>**

## **Commentary**

The timing of these matters is beyond coincidence. For the sake of discussion, let us suppose the first banquet occurred on Monday evening. The king and Haman are present for very different reasons. The king is full of curiosity and Haman, his best friend, is full of ego. The king detects something is up with his lovely Esther because no one would dare to approach him as Esther did unless a serious problem existed. Esther was timid and nervous and to encourage her to divulge what was on her heart, the king generously offered her anything she wanted – up to half his kingdom!

Evidently, Esther sensed the mood that evening was not right for her request. So, she stalled by asking for another banquet the following night. If this stalling technique were planned from the beginning, it surely worked. The king left the banquet more puzzled than before and, of course, Haman was only too pleased to attend another banquet. What greater honor could he hope for than to be seen dining with the king and queen once again?

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 5:1-8, insertion mine

**Part VII – A Sleepless King and A Frustrated Haman**

**“Haman went out [from the first banquet] that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king’s gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home. Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. ‘And that’s not all,’ Haman added. ‘I’m the *only* person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate.’**

**“His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, ‘Have a pole [gallows] set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits [seventy-five feet], and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled [hanged] on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself.’ This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole [gallows] set up.”<sup>1</sup>**

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1 Esther 5:9-14, insertions and italics mine

**“[Meanwhile] That [same] night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king’s officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.**

**“‘What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?’ the king asked.**

**“‘Nothing has been done for him,’ his attendants answered.**

**“[The next morning] The king said, ‘Who is in the court?’ Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling [hanging] Mordecai on the pole [gallows] he had set up for him.**

**“His attendants answered, ‘Haman is standing in the court.’**

**“‘Bring him in,’ the king ordered.**

**“When Haman entered, the king [without giving Haman a chance to speak] asked him, ‘What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?’**

**“Now Haman thought to himself, ‘Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?’ So he answered the king, ‘For the man the king delights to honor, have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’” ’**

**“ ‘Go at once,’ the king commanded Haman. ‘Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king’s gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended.’**

**“So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’**

**“Afterward Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.**

**“His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, ‘Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!’ While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.”<sup>1</sup>**

### Commentary

Do you sense that the timing of these events could not have been coincidental? The *same* night that Haman decided to hang Mordecai, the king could not sleep, which led to the discovery that Mordecai’s faithfulness had gone unrewarded! The next morning, Haman stops by the palace seeking permission to hang Mordecai while the king is searching for a way to highly honor the same Jew whom Haman wants to kill! The king knows nothing about Haman’s plans and Haman knows nothing of the king’s desire! What are the odds of this happening? Imagine how Haman must have felt escorting Mordecai on a royal horse around Susa for several hours crying out, **“This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!”**<sup>2</sup> Haman’s “country club buddies” must have split their sides in laughter when they saw this. Mordecai may also have had to restrain a smile as he watched Haman lead his horse.

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 6:1-14, insertions mine

<sup>2</sup> Esther 6:11



Zeresh, Haman's wife, was insightful. She saw the fate of her proud husband immediately. Perhaps the Holy Spirit caused an utterance to come out of her mouth similar to the utterance that came out of Balaam's mouth when he tried to curse Israel. She said, **"Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!"**<sup>1</sup>

History reveals that the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans all intensely disliked the Jews, as a nation of people. Even though relations between Israel and the Medes and Persians were never good, and even though relations between Israel and God were not as good as they should have been, God did not allow the nation of Israel to perish until He had fulfilled His promise to Abraham. After Jesus' ministry on Earth was finished, God permitted the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

### **Part VIII – Esther's Second Banquet**

**"So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, 'Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.'**

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 6:13

**“Then Queen Esther answered, ‘If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.’**

**“King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, ‘Where is he the man who has dared to do such a thing?’**

**“Esther said, ‘An adversary and enemy [of the Jews]! This vile Haman!’**

**“Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.**

**“Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.**

**“The king exclaimed, ‘Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?’**

**“As soon as the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s [fearful] face. Then Harbona,**

**one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, ‘A pole [gallows] reaching to a height of fifty cubits [75 feet] stands by Haman’s house. He had it set up for Mordecai [this morning], who spoke up to help the king.’**

**“The king said, ‘Impale [hang] him on it!’ So they hanged Haman on the pole [gallows] he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided.”<sup>1</sup>**

**“That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her.”<sup>2</sup>**

## **Part IX – Justice Served**

**“[Later, Esther went again before the king without permission.] Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite [with the force of law], which he had devised against the Jews. Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther and she arose and stood before him.**

**“ ‘If it pleases the king,’ she said, ‘and if he regards me with favor and thinks it the right thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let an order be writ-**

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 7:1-10, insertions mine

<sup>2</sup> Esther 8:1

ten overruling the dispatches that Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces. For how can I bear to see disaster fall on my people? How can I bear to see the destruction of my family?'

"King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to Mordecai the Jew, 'Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have impaled [hanged] him on the pole [gallows] he set up. Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked.'

"At once the royal secretaries were summoned—on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush [Egypt]. These orders were written in the script of each province and the language of each people and also to the Jews in their own script and language. Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king.

**“The king’s edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill, and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them and their women and children, and to plunder the property of their enemies. The day appointed for the Jews to do this in all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.**

**“The couriers, riding the royal horses, went out, spurred on by the king’s command, and the edict was issued in in the citadel of Susa. When Mordecai left the king’s presence, he was wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe of fine linen. And the [Jews in the] city of Susa held a joyous celebration. For the Jews it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honor.”<sup>1</sup>**

## **Part X – Revenge**

**“In every province and in every city to where the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And**

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 8:1-16, insertions mine

**many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.”<sup>1</sup>**

**“On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those determined to destroy them. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king’s administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.**

**“The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them.”<sup>2</sup>**

**“Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annu-**

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 8:17

<sup>2</sup> Esther 9:1-5

ally the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

“So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordecai had written to them. For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. But when the plot came to the king’s attention, he issued written orders that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be impaled [hanged] on poles [the gallows]. (Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word *pur*.) Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, the Jews took it on themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Esther 9:20-27, insertions mine

## Comments

This story has five end time parallels.

1. First, Esther's story illustrates how one clever man was able to set up a universal death decree for God's people. There is a direct end time parallel to this in Revelation 13 and Daniel 12. Revelation 13:15 says, **"The second beast [the Antichrist] was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed."** (Insertion mine) This verse references the universal death decree to annihilate the saints that will be set up. This death decree will occur during the Great Tribulation because God's people will refuse to worship the image of the beast (the one-world religion imposed by Lucifer); they will refuse the mark of the beast (the tattoo/brand required by Lucifer); and they will refuse to submit to the laws of the Antichrist (Lucifer) who will be masquerading as almighty God. Eventually, all the saints who refuse to obey the Antichrist will be condemned to death *at an appointed time*. Daniel tells us when the universal death decree occurs: **"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and**



**reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”<sup>1</sup>** There will be a death decree for the saints! God wants His children to know what is coming so they can stand firm in perilous times and have faith in His mighty arm of salvation. The story of Esther was put in the Bible to build our faith. Bible prophecy indicates that the **daily** intercession of Jesus in heaven’s temple will come to a close, and this event will be marked by a global earthquake.<sup>2</sup> When this occurs, the saints are to begin counting because 1,290 days later, a universal *death decree* will be “set up.” Do not be afraid, because there is good news! The universal death decree will not be implemented because God, as He did in this story of Esther, will overturn the evil scheme of the Antichrist through a mighty display of power and authority.

2. The second end time parallel in the story is that God turned the universal death decree around so the Jews could destroy their enemies without guilt! King Xerxes did not fret one bit that 75,800 people in his kingdom were killed. How miraculous are God’s ways. He created fear in the hearts of the Jews’ enemies and they became powerless and easily defeated *at the appointed time*. This “fear element” needs some emphasis because this feature explains a profound point that is often overlooked in the Old Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 12:11-12

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 8:2-5

When Israel was doing God's will, every battle was the Lord's battle, not theirs. Moses declared, "[If you love the Lord and serve Him with all your heart] **Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you.**"<sup>1</sup> **"No one will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go."**<sup>2</sup> Israel was to be God's arms and legs, and as long as Israel remained faithful to the Lord, the Bible says, **"The fear of God came on all the surrounding kingdoms when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel."**<sup>3</sup> When Israel rebelled against the Lord, you guessed it, the enemies of Israel became bold while Israel became weak and afraid. Because a universal death decree was pronounced on Israel in Esther's day, the Jews became humble and submissive, and God honored their repentance. Did you notice in the story of Esther that many Gentiles became Jews because the fear of Jews was upon them? **"And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them."**<sup>4</sup> The same event will happen during the end time. Many people will repent of their sins and become believers in Christ

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1 Deuteronomy 28:10, insertion mine

2 Deuteronomy 11:25

3 2 Chronicles 20:29

4 Esther 8:17

because they will see the power of God resting on His people!

3. The third end time parallel is the connection between Purim and when the time of God's work of redemption ends. Mordecai recorded the events of Purim. **"He wrote them to observe the days [of Purim] as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor."**<sup>1</sup> This text is very interesting in light of the end time. To celebrate overwhelming victory over their enemies, the Jews were to perpetually observe the Feast of Purim with **"feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor."** Now, compare Revelation 11:7-10: **"Now when they [the Two Witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss [Lucifer, the lamb-like beast] will attack them, and overpower and kill them. For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth."**

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1 Esther 9:22, insertion mine

Especially notice the last sentence. The parallel between Purim and this event in Revelation is apparent. A time is coming when the wicked will gloat and rejoice over the death of God's Two Witnesses because the Two Witnesses will be silenced. Basically, this text points forward to a time when Lucifer and his followers will gloat, rejoice and celebrate over the fact that God's work on Earth has ended. Of course, this does not mean that God's plans or purposes have been destroyed. A time will come when the last of God's 144,000 messengers will be martyred and salvation is no longer offered. It is at that time when the torment of the Holy Spirit will cease. The wicked will gloat and rejoice because they think their torment is over, but it is not the end of the story.

4. The fourth end time parallel centers around the timing of the universal death decree in the book of Esther. Remember, the date of the death decree in Esther's day was established by casting the pur. **"In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman to select a day and month. And the lot fell on the twelfth month, the month of Adar."**<sup>1</sup> Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 3:7

**and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.”<sup>1</sup>** I believe there is an amazing parallel between *the date* of the universal death decree in Esther’s day and *the date* of the universal death decree during the Great Tribulation. Interestingly, these two events appear to happen on the same day and in the same month, on a full moon in the month of Adar (February)!

5. The fifth end time parallel is found in how Esther represented Jesus. He is our lovely Savior in whom there is no defect. When Adam and Eve sinned, a universal death decree was placed on the human race, but Jesus went before the King of the Universe. Through His intercession, we have been offered an escape from eternal death. Jesus was not only willing to die for His people, like Esther, but He also *did die* for you and me. Even though the Bible predicts a universal death decree will be set up for God’s helpless people, it also says the saints have a Savior who is greater than the forces of evil. Jesus will foil the wicked plans of Lucifer just as He did with Haman. He will turn the circumstances upside down, and God will impose the universal death decree on Satan and the armies of Earth. They will perish by the command (sword) that comes out of the mouth

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 3:13

of Jesus at the Second Coming. I hope to see His return with my own eyes! No wonder Daniel wrote, **“Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”**<sup>1</sup>

The story recorded in Esther tells us. . .

- God never sleeps and He always keeps vigil over His people.
- God’s timing is always perfect, down to the split-second, when necessary.
- God can turn a universal death decree into a glorious victory if His children are faithful and loyal to Him.
- The time is coming when we, the last generation, will face the *same obstacles* that God’s people faced some 2,500 years ago.

I pray that each of us will be as faith-full as Mordecai and Esther. Their faith and courage show what God can accomplish *if* we are willing to stand up for what is right!

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 12:12

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